



STEWARDSHIP
& PARTNERSHIPS

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS PROGRAM

Maurice

National Scenic and Recreational River



Located along the Atlantic flyway, the Maurice River offers food and habitat for many species of birds

Designated: December 1, 1993

Location: The 35.4 miles of the Maurice River system (which includes Menanatico and Muskee Creeks and the Manumuskin River) travels through five municipalities and two counties in southern New Jersey on its way to the Delaware Bay.

Outstanding Resources: The Maurice River corridor is an unusually pristine coastal river with national

and internationally important resources. As part of the Atlantic flyway, its clean waters and related habitats are vitally important to the migration of shorebirds, songbirds, waterfowl, raptors, rails and fish. The river supports New Jersey's largest stand of wild rice and 53 percent of the animal species that the state has recognized as endangered, excluding marine mammals. The river is a critical link between the Pinelands National Reserve and the Delaware Estuary.

Overview:

The Maurice River and its tributaries drain the southwest portion of the Pinelands National Reserve. The Pinelands Commission considers the entire Manumuskin watershed to be an ecologically critical area which supports important aquatic communities characteristic of the Pinelands. State and local governments, as well as conser-



The Maurice River corridor supports 53% of New Jersey's threatened and endangered species

vation organizations, own significant acreage for preservation and conservation purposes. The huge, unspoiled Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer underlies most of the region and the rivers and associated wetlands serve as nurseries for ocean-going species. They offer food and habitat for both resident and migrating species. Annually, huge flocks of birds alight within the watershed to enjoy, if only briefly, the area's natural bounty.

The Maurice River corridor is an area rich in natural, cultural and historical significance. Its tributaries, and the bay beyond, not only shaped the lifestyle and livelihood of the region's inhabitants in the past, they continue to support the region's economy and the lifestyle of many of today's corridor residents. Early industries depended on river water channeled into swiftly flowing mill races. Some residents built dikes so they could farm the often boggy lands close to the river. Many others worked in maritime occupations. Local ship builders provided vessels for fishing area waters and for carrying local products to distant markets. The region's entire glass making industry emerged because of, and still depends upon, the sandy deposits found throughout the watershed. Cumberland County's heritage is steeped in the history of

the Lenni-Lenape people, a nation that numbered some 6,000 inhabitants at the time of the earliest colonial explorations of the Delaware Bay region.

Management Goals:

Four critical goals were outlined during the study and designation process and are emphasized in the draft Comprehensive Management Plan. The Plan will be completed in the next two years.

Goals:

Foster the protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the rivers and their adjacent lands for future generations.

Promote economic vitality by acknowledging rights of traditional businesses and stimulating future compatible opportunities.

Balance residential, commercial and industrial activities with the protection of the area's important resources to ensure and enhance the quality of life for the river communities.

Encourage coordination and consistency among existing levels of government, businesses, organizations and individuals to facilitate implementation of management plans without creating a new regulatory agency or infringing on individual property rights.

Management Approach:

Cumberland County serves as the critical link to the five municipalities and the region. They work cooperatively with the National Park Service to resolve issues and identify education and resource protection opportunities in the river corridor. This approach has been quite successful and is expected to be further implemented as the long-term management strategy as defined in the Management Plan.